Introduction

Welcome to the ‘How to Run a Whole School Litter Campaign’ education pack from CPRE Northamptonshire. This has been written to support the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s Stop the Drop campaign.

This pack has been designed for use by both teachers and pupils in primary schools, and contains a variety of useful information, resources, lesson ideas, curriculum links and practical suggestions about how you can raise awareness and tackle the issue of litter in your school and local area.

Along with all the ideas and information, there is a storybook, which can be used with EYFS and KS1 pupils, and a CD-ROM that contains PowerPoint presentations to support lessons and assemblies, posters that can be printed and displayed, and photos that can be used for awareness raising and in lessons.

For many more resources that will help primary schools with litter projects, visit our website www.CPRENorthants.org.uk and click on the Schools link.

CPRE Northamptonshire has been campaigning on litter in the county since the launch of Stop the Drop a few years ago. Many villages and community groups organise their litter picks to align with our spring clean campaign, and compete in our Litter Heroes competition. Judges award cash prizes, to be spent on future litter initiatives, to those groups which encourage people of all ages to wake up to the evils of littering, and show that they want to do something as a community to address the problem.

I hope you find the contents of this pack useful, and wish you all the best in tackling litter in your school.

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At CPRE, we know litter is a lot more than merely unsightly. It has huge economic consequences, with councils in England spending nearly a billion pounds every year clearing it up – public money that could, as you well know, be far better spent on other social provisions. Litter kills and maims wildlife in very large numbers – a hideous outcome from a thoughtless act that we know children particularly find motivating when changing their behaviour. It encourages additional unsociable behaviour. More widely, it's an insult to England's glorious landscape and it powerfully influences visitors' perceptions of our country. It's not a trivial, peripheral issue at all. It's a central factor affecting our quality of life. It sets the tone. It's what says to the world: “This is how we live here, this is what we put up with and this is who we are.”

The solution to this problem really is quite simple. All we have to do is stop people dropping it in the first place. And we have to get it picked up when it does get dropped. In 2008, CPRE launched Stop the Drop, its national anti-litter campaign, with a view to achieving both these things. Many people have subsequently told us that when they were young it was never this bad, and almost all agreed that children need to be educated about not dropping litter from the youngest possible age, with that same message being reinforced throughout the duration of their education and adult life.

That is why we created this pack. And that is why it is so heartening you are reading it. As a teacher you have the opportunity to instil in children and young people the fundamental sense that littering is wrong and why they should love and respect the environment.

Amongst your impossibly busy schedule and all the other important lessons you have to impart to those in your charge, I would urge you to take advantage of the wonderful lesson plans and activities in this pack. I've seen first-hand that King Wasteanol's Picnic is particularly good fun. If we can teach our children now about litter, hopefully in the years to come they will remember the valuable lessons learned when they were little and do the right thing by putting litter firmly where it belongs – in the bin.

With best wishes and many thanks for all your work.
This pack has been produced by the Northamptonshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England - CPRE. It is an adaptation of original work produced by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and endorsed by CPRE. The pack’s original authors were Nicola Smith and Gail Grimes of WWT’s Environmental and Waste Education Team, which is part of its Department of Environmental Learning. Generous support for the original project was provided by The Underwood Trust.

CPRE campaigns for a beautiful and living countryside, because we believe that the English countryside is unique, essential and precious… and in danger. One of our key objectives is to initiate and support activities that directly improve the countryside and rural communities. We want diverse, thriving rural communities and we care about animals, birds and the natural environment. We recognise that town dwellers also want to recharge their batteries with a walk or a bike ride in accessible rural areas.

With this background, CPRE Northamptonshire has naturally and enthusiastically supported the flagship Stop the Drop litter campaign, ever since its inception a few years ago. The campaign lobbied for the national Love Where you Live initiative from Keep Britain Tidy and DEFRA. This is a long-term campaign, which aims to convince everyone, rural and urban dwellers alike, that if their surroundings are not blighted by litter, life is much more enjoyable, and much safer for wildlife.

CPRE Northamptonshire has been funded on this project by the Margaret Giffen Charitable Trust and The Wilson Foundation. Our grateful thanks go to both of them.

We have also been assisted by The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, WTBCNP, whose vision is ‘people close to nature, in a land rich in wildlife’. The Trust wants to inspire people to take action for wildlife by providing advice and sharing information. In Northamptonshire, they have 49 reserves covering an area of approximately 900 hectares, which provide havens for a diverse range of ecologically important plants and animals. For more information, please contact: WTBCNP, Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton NN3 8BE Northamptonshire@wildlifebcnp.org, 01604 405285
Original photos in this pack were provided by the RSPCA, Kent Wildlife Trust and the Marine Conservation Society. CPRE Northamptonshire gives its permission for any part of this pack to be copied for educational purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.

Above: some happy litter pickers after the annual Stop the Drop campaign in the town of Raunds, Northamptonshire, which this year coincided with its carnival (photo courtesy of Raunds Town Council). Below: a litter pick in progress, followed by prize-giving, in Spratton, Northamptonshire (photos courtesy of Michael Heaton).

Litter picking around Deanshanger Primary School. Both Deanshanger and Spratton helped their respective villages to win a CPRE Northamptonshire Litter Heroes Award.